

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 IO-10 /050 W
----- 108811

R 111425Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8198

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 0870

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR LY US

SUBJ: NEW LIBYAN AMBASSADOR TO TUNISIA

1. RECENTLY ARRIVED LIBYAN AMBASSADOR TO TUNISIA, ABDELHAMID ZENTATI, CALLED ON ME TODAY, FEB. 11, I WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED AT HIS FRIENDLY AND OUTGOING MANNER. WHILE FACT WE SPOKE IN ARABIC NO DOUBT HELPED CLEAR THE AIR, HE EXPRESSED A NUMBER OF VIEWS DIFFERING FROM POLICY LINE HANDED DOWN BY QADHAFI. FOR EXAMPLE, HE WISHED PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER GOOD LUCK IN CURRENT PEACE NEGOTIATING ROUND AND EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT IF ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM COULD BE SOLVED, U.S. POSITION IN ARAB WORLD WOULD BE GREATLY ENHANCED. HE HEARTILY AGREED WITH MY OBSERVATION THAT DESPITE POLICY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WE SHOULD MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS CONTACT.

2. WHILE I MUST TAKE MUCH OF WHAT ZENTATI HAS TO SAY WITH A GRAIN OF SALT, GIVEN TRADITIONAL ARABIC INCLINATION TO TELL LISTENER WHAT HE WANTS TO HEAR, I INTEND TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS CONTACT VIEW OTHERWISE GENERAL COOLNESS IN OFFICIAL U.S.-LIBYAN RELATIONS. ZENTATI TELLS ME THAT HE MAJORED IN PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY AT BENGHAZI UNIVERSITY AND THAT HE HAS VISITED THE U.S. TO ATTEND "CONFERENCES" A COUPLE OF TIMES. BEFORE BEING APPOINTED AMBASSADOR, HE SERVED IN CABINET AS MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS.

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3. ANY FURTHER INFORMATION WHICH EMBASSY TRIPOLI CAN
PROVIDE CONCERNING ZENTATI WOULD BE APPRECIATED.
SEELYE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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